

# **Notes of the Environmental Network meeting held on 18 November 2025**

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# Environmental Network Notes

18/11/2025

## 1. Attendees

Three Rivers District Council Members and staff present: Cllr Jon Tankard (Chair), Cllr Chris Lloyd (Vice Chair), Cllr Stephen King, Elen Dolder and Jo Hewitson

## 2. Apologies

No apologies were received from Council Members.

## 3. Talks

Sarah Burgess described GUCE's role and the solar canopy project (Attached)

*Are there issues around maintenance? What is different about each design for maintenance? Can we find out how other councils are managing the maintenance?* These questions will all be explored over the course of the project and we will book in meetings with those who have undertaken similar works if the project progresses.

Request for TRDC to Review website page for community gardens, to ensure it is kept up to date.

Elen Dolder gave a summary of TRDC progress on their Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan (Attached)

Identify how many installations on solar together have been undertaken, this has been added to the presentation attached.

#### 4. Discussion

##### **Advice for residents and useful links:**

- Install a Smart Meter and regularly check your utility usage.
- For home visits to see the technology in action and ask people questions about the process, do a home visit - [Visit a Heat Pump](#)
- Judith from St Albans has had a whole home energy upgrade and has lots of advice to share: <https://ecorenovationhome.com/so/a7Pg10K0 ?languageTag=en&cid=095f0e67-2797-4bf7-b1ae-120c1a2d30a2>

For advice on home energy upgrades and trusted installers;

- Eco homes and gardens event by FOTE.
- Use your energy company
- Ask your neighbors / WhatsApp group.
- MCS accredited installers
- Ask potential installers for references and follow them up.  
Use [Hiya Car](#) for local car hire.

##### **TRUST is a key barrier and influence – how can we build it?**

- Smart meter installation and bill watching can change behavior through awareness.
- Solar Together- reviews for some companies were bad, breaking trust.
- Solar together was hard – even some of the keenest people struggled.
- Personal recommendations are preferred - *how can people get them?*
- Step by step guide and Tik Tok style videos through the whole process.
- Solar together don't have capacity for binge and purge - leading to inadequate quality and customer care at times.
- Real, local facts/figures/examples. [Super Homes.com](#)
- Talk to Judith from St Albans about talking to the Network.
- Energy is very complex for people to understand - needs to be kept simple.
- Funeral plan for your boiler  
*Who can we trust? How do we know what to do first? What goes in the plan?*
- An Energy Clinic with TRDC logo/support would be good (Maybe not Energy Clinic).

## Campaign and awareness ideas

- Many don't have the disposable income or have different priorities, funding options are needed.
- Go hyper local and focus 5 streets at a time. *Leafleting, not door knocking, ask them questions and give solutions, don't try to sell, ask what barriers they are facing or what would reduce their energy use.*
- Advert in Watersmeet, particularly before kids/family film, encouraging people to install solar & heat pumps.
- Use our data to target early adopters.
- Target high carbon users and highlight resale value of home.
- Focus on a center point with lots of traffic and work outwards make it appear more popular and visible.
- Possible facts/stats: % of people aren't taking advantage of free energy/solar (how many homes are suitable vs have solar installed).
- Possible messaging: Tell your neighbors! Spread the word.
- Create draft message for residents to send to their WhatsApp groups/community pages – *Can MCS do this when someone has had an installation if the resident agrees to the reminders to send?*
- Leisure Centers, RAs and S3R and Rickmansworth Sunday market are key.

## Transport

- Car sharing on streets/in developments? Can you mandate car club in new development?
- Case study from South-Oxhey video.
- Transport theme next time with planning Officers present?
- Watford have a car club at a new development - *how have they done it?*
- Carpenters Park development has a shared car parking space – *is this used?*

## 5. Next meeting

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Time and location: To be confirmed.

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# Solar Canopy

## Car Parks:

## local energy solutions

Sarah Burgess  
Anna Addison

November 2025



On behalf of:



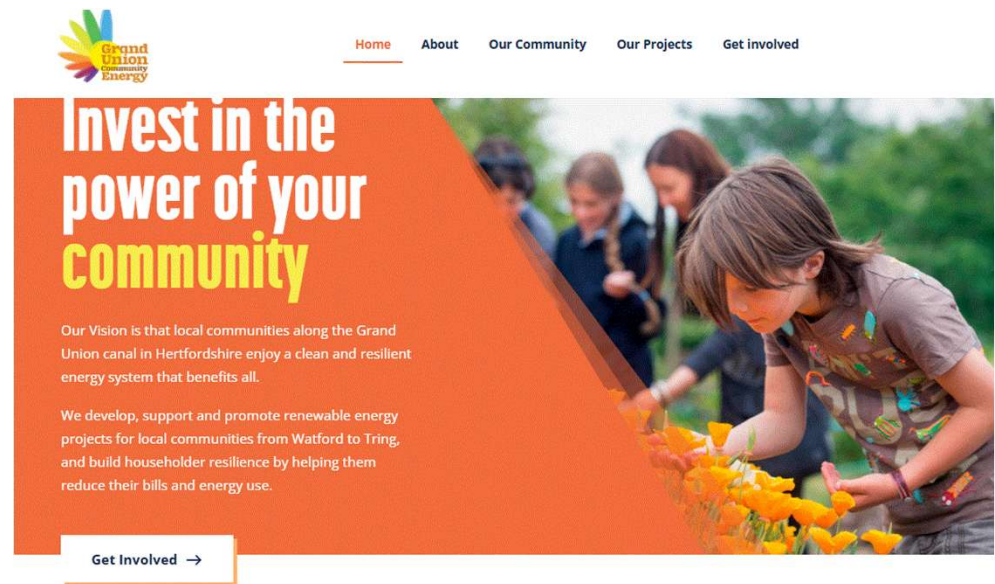
# Agenda

1. Who is GUCE
2. Solar canopies on Three Rivers Car Parks
3. Getting involved



# Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE)

- Community Benefit Society 2012
- Volunteer Board
- South West Herts
- 40 members
- Community benefit driven
- TRDC partner on Solar Canopy project



# Solar canopy car parks across the UK

North Norfolk District Council /  
Reef Leisure Centre



Northumberland County Council



Cornwall Council,  
New County Hall

# Work to date

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<b>2019</b>	TRDC declare a climate emergency and set a net zero target of 2030 (council)/ 2045 (district).
<b>2019</b>	Assessment of net zero trajectory identifies that 800KW of additional solar PV is required.
<b>2020</b>	TRDC does not have enough available roof space or greenspace for rooftop solar or a solar farm of that magnitude. Solar canopies in council-owned car parks is a potential solution to that challenge.
<b>2024</b>	220KW solar PV system installed on William Penn Leisure Centre.
<b>2024</b>	£40k award from Community Energy Fund to test feasibility of solar canopies in 7 car parks.
<b>2024</b>	Identifies Rose Garden, William Penn and South Oxhey Leisure Centre car parks as best locations.
<b>2025</b>	Procurement completed for 47.70KW additional rooftop solar PV at Three Rivers House.
<b>2025</b>	Procurement underway for ~140KW additional rooftop PV at South Oxhey Leisure Centre.

# What's happening now

- March 2025 - TRDC was awarded £75k grant from the Investment Readiness Service (IRS) of the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH).
- Funds used for further assessment of potential solar canopy installations at:
  - William Penn and South Oxhey leisure centre car parks
  - the Rose Garden car park
- This will develop:
  - evaluation of the financial viability of the locations
  - business cases to enable the council to make informed decisions
- A public consultation is underway to gain feedback on:
  - whether or not solar canopies are a good idea on the council car parks
  - and if so – which of the provisional designs are preferred

# Community Engagement



## Drop in sessions:

Three Rivers House: 14th October 12-1.30pm and 5.30-7.30pm  
William Penn Leisure Centre: 18th October 10-12noon  
South Oxhey Leisure Centre: 21st October 11am-1pm

## Presentations:

Oxhey Library: 7th November 9.45am-11.15am  
Waterways Education Centre: 11th November 7-8.30pm  
Online 12th November 7-8pm



# Canopy Structure Option 1

## SIG Canopy Structures

Prioritises a minimal structural footprint.

Its double post configuration offers a stable and balanced structure.

This makes it a more cost-effective option rather than a single post design.

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# Canopy Structure Option 2

## Bluetop Canopy



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Features a single-post cantilever structure with a single ground contact point.

This configuration maximises usable parking space by reducing obstructions, making vehicle access and manoeuvring easier while minimising the risk of damage to both vehicles and the structures.





# Canopy Structure Option 3

## Solfit Canopy



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Can support a much larger-scale PV system by spanning the entire car park with a continuous canopy.

The smaller-footprint posts minimise disruption to parking layouts.

PV panels form a watertight cover – providing both energy generation and all weather protection across the full parking area.





## Next steps

- **Q4 2025:** Produce a business case and report summarising the findings of financial analysis and community engagement sessions.
- **Q1 2026:** The business case and report will be published on the TRDC website and scrutinised by the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- **TBC 2026:** If approved - the business case/report will progress to the Policy & Resources Committee and potentially a full council vote.



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# Questions

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# Power Down: Sustainable Streets

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- Award winning programme
- Community connection and engagement
- Seven workshops - Six key topics:
  - Energy
  - Water
  - Food
  - Resources
  - Travel
  - Nature
- Any type of group



Thank you

Website: <http://guce.org.uk>

Facebook : @GUCELTD

Instagram: @GUCE\_UK

# Outcome from the initial feasibility test

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Site	South Oxhey LC	William Penn LC	Rose Garden
Annual Generation (MWh)	134.7	421.1	180.9
No. Panels	318	972	456
Local Consumption (% Generation)	93.8%	41.0%	89.0%
Self-Sufficiency (% demand met)	23.1%	19.7%	22.9%
Carbon Savings (lifetime, tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	815	2,548	1,095
Indicative Capital Cost (£)	£287,868	£923,167	£407,410
Breakeven Year	9	14	10

# Images of solar canopies security lighting

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# Power Down: Energy Champions

- Home Visits and Group Presentations
- Up to date grant information
- Answer fuel bill questions
- Heating setting and programming
- Information on decarbonising and retrofitting

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# THREE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

Elen Dolder

# New TREN

- Proposed Refreshed Terms of Reference (TOR) and name change to go to Committee in January.
- Newly proposed TOR will be attached with the notes of this meeting.
- **Connect** people, ideas, and initiatives
- **Inspire** behaviour change and collective action
- **Educate** with expert insight and lived experience
- **Influence** Council decision-making through community-led input
- **Three themed in-person meetings per year**, hosted in rotating locations across the District (one at Three Rivers House, two elsewhere)
- **Additional webinars or online talks** in winter months or where accessibility is a concern.
- An **ongoing communication hub** for updates, events, campaigns, and resources.
- TREN is not a decision-making body or formal Council committee. It is hosted and administered by Three Rivers District Council.

# Action Plan update Report

- Council emissions down **8% vs 2018/19**.
- Council-owned building emissions down **13%**.

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District-wide emissions down **15.47% (2018–2023)**.

**£420,804 external funding** secured since March 2025.

- Of **23 Council's emissions actions**: **12 complete, 8 on track, 2 retired, 1 at risk**.
- Of the **77 District emission actions**: **28 complete, 24 on track, 3 retired, 3 delayed, 6 not started, and 13 new proposed actions**.

## Council emission highlights

- Completed a feasibility study on seven TRDC car parks and secured £75,000 to develop detailed studies for the three most viable sites. (South Oxhey Leisure Centre, William Penn Leisure Centre, and the Rose Garden car park at Three Rivers House).
- EV Charging Points installed, or undergoing installation at 9 sites.
- Solar installations to take place at Three Rivers House and South Oxhey Leisure Centre in the New Year.

# District emission highlights

- Secured £736,515 Heritage Fund development funding toward a future £4m bid for the Aquadrome project.
- EV Charging Strategy adopted Feb 2025.
- Updated LCWIP adopted July 2025; HCC to progress detailed design.
- March 2025 Careers Fair drew 1,000+ attendees; green careers promoted.
- “Your Tree, Our Future” saw 7,902 trees ordered for Dec 2025 collection.
- Solar Together 2025: 454 registrations, 82 deposits; installs underway. 75 installations have taken place through the scheme since 2022.
- Draft net-zero new-build policies included in July 2025 Reg. 19 Local Plan.
- Secured £3.75m to improve ~127 low-income, inefficient homes (2025–28).
- Council endorsed Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy (July 2025).



# District emission highlights

- Council endorsed Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy (July 2025).
- £298k Innovate UK Fast Followers project completed June 2025.
- Retrofit One Stop Shop trial delivered 100 HERO plans; 24 retrofits completed.
- Community energy and Transition Streets programme delivered with 22 residents completing.
- Identified seven priority TRDC building decarbonisation projects (2025–28).
- “Community Conversations” climate consultation completed; resident-authored recommendations integrated.
- Great Big Green Week film screening attracted 300+ attendees.
- Energy Plan development underway, including business engagement and liaison with UKPN.
- Council requested Heat Network feasibility funding linked to data-centre waste heat.

# New Actions

- Support Herts Retrofit Strategy
- Support local businesses
- Feasibility study for Data Centre Heat Network
- Sustainable travel communications plan
- Support community garden or biodiversity hub in each Parish
- Support a growing space in West Hyde Youth Club and with other youth groups
- Refresh Environmental Forum
- Three rivers Green Champions Awards
- Promote GoVol Herts
- Embed Climate Adaptation into procurement tenders

## Key projects and next steps

- Offsetting Principles report to be submitted to Committee in January 2026.
- Deliver £345,803 WHLG funding in 2025/26 for ~22 homes; support rises to ~50 homes/year in years 2–3.
- Continue partnership with Grand Union Community Energy and deliver ~10 more Transition Streets groups.
- Support the Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy and share ROSS learnings.
- Draft Sustainability Policies for the Local Plan out for consultation.
- Develop the Three Rivers Energy Plan with expanded business engagement and UKPN data.
- Explore Heat Network feasibility funding for using data-centre waste heat.



# Help us reduce energy use

- What would help you to reduce energy use, or generate your own energy?
- What have you done already?
- What barriers do you face?
- How can you/we support/encourage others? Any ideas for campaigns?
- What local/community opportunities can you think of?

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